

## Watering tips & usage FAQ

THE COLONY, Texas — Over the course of the past two days, the city's Customer Services Department has fielded hundreds of queries from residents regarding their latest water bill. Indeed, usage amounts for the previous five-week billing cycle show unusually high increases for many residents throughout the city. Similar circumstances are being reported in other communities as well.

**We continue to encourage residents who have concerns about their bills to contact us at 972-624-3100.** Our Customer Service team will make every effort to individually verify meter readings and go over the usage data with each customer that contacts us.

In the meantime, we would like to share some information about sprinkler use, swimming pools, and other watering tips that are proving to be helpful in the course of addressing concerns shared by residents regarding their water usage:



### **How much water does my sprinkler system use?**

To calculate sprinkler usage, average of 5 gallons per minute per sprinkler head, multiplied by the number of sprinkler heads, multiplied by the number of stations. Multiply that number by the number of times you water in a week or month. Example:

- 20 minutes x 5 gallons per minute = 100 gallons for one sprinkler head
- 100 gallons x 5 sprinkler heads in a station/zone = 500 gallons used per station/zone
- 500 gallons x 6 stations = 3,000 gallons used for one watering
- 3,000 gallons x 3 days per week = 9,000 for one week of watering
- 9,000 gallons x 4 weeks = 36,000 gallons used to water the lawn in a 4-week cycle

### **Another way to see how much water your irrigation system is using:**

Open your meter box lid and take a picture of the dial prior to starting irrigation. Once your cycles have completed, take another picture of the dial. Subtract the numbers on the white dials from your pictures. This will give you a good idea of how much water is going through your irrigation system for one watering. Remember, you are billed in thousands.

Example: Number prior to watering is 20. Number after watering is 25. The irrigation system used approximately 5,000 gallons of water for one watering.

### **How much water does my pool use to refill from evaporating?**

The average amount of water evaporation per day is 1/2-inch. Multiplied by 7 days, that's 3.5 inches of water evaporated in a week. To refill the pool 3.5 inches, use this calculation:

Length x Width x Depth (3.5 inches evaporation loss divided by 12) x 7.48 = number of gallons to refill from evaporation. Example: 13 x 32 x .292 x 7.48 = 908 gallons to refill per week, or 3,632 gallons per month.

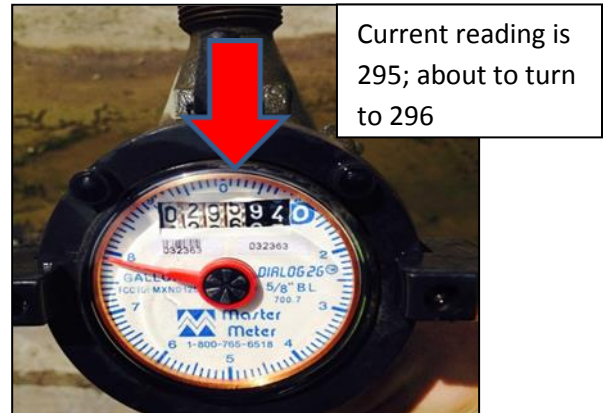
### **The Do's and Don'ts for watering your yard**

- **DO:** Water in dry weather.
- **DO:** Water early in the morning.
- **DO:** Water every 5-6 days in hot weather.
- **DO:** Use sprinklers that are close to the ground rather than high in the air, because larger drops are better than fine mist.
- **DON'T:** Water from mid-morning to late afternoon. You will lose 1/3 of your water to evaporation. Try watering before 10 a.m.
- **DON'T:** Overwater because it causes valuable nutrients to wash away.
- **DON'T:** Water too frequently because it causes shallow root system to develop.
- **DON'T:** Water at night because the grass stays wet and encourages the development of disease.

### **How long should I water, and how do I know if I've watered enough?**

Let the sprinkler soak an area for about 30 minutes. Dig a spade into the ground and see for yourself whether the water is getting down deep enough; if not water for another 30 minutes.

To determine if you've watered enough, step on a patch of grass. If the blades spring up, then no watering is necessary. If they don't, then you need to continue watering.



### **If I have a leak, how much water is being wasted?**

Water wasted at 40 pounds of pressure over a 24-hour period:

- 1/32" leak wastes 180 gallons
- 1/16" leak wastes 690 gallons
- 1/8" leak wastes 2,760 gallons
- 1/4" leak wastes 11,030 gallons

### **To be safe:**

- Check every faucet and toilet for leaks. A leak can waste a lot of water every day, so repair leaks immediately.
- Open the tank of the toilet up and put a few drops of food coloring into it. Then see if the coloring is going into the bowl, if so then you have a leak.

### **Water Usage Facts**

- Toilet flush = 5 to 7 gallons
- Shower = 25 to 50 gallons
- Hand washing = 2 gallons with running tap
- Tooth brushing = 2 gallons with running tap
- Outdoor watering = 5 to 10 gallons per minute
- Automatic dishwasher = 10 gallons
- Dishwashing by hand = 20 gallons
- Tub bath = 36 gallons

### **Additional tips to save water:**

- Use brooms to sweep the sidewalk, not a water hose.
- Position sprinklers so they only water the lawn, not the sidewalk.
- Low-flush or air-assisted toilets cut toilet water usage up to 90 percent. Or, put a brick in your toilet bowl to displace some of the water without losing flushing pressure.
- Turn off water while you are brushing your teeth, washing your hands or even scraping dishes.

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